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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 25, 1953

TO THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES:

SUBJECT: S. J. Res. 1 -- "Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to the making of treaties and executive agreements."
and
S. J. Res. 2 -- "To impose limitations with regard to Executive agreements."

The two Senate joint resolutions referred to above have been called to my attention. These resolutions concern matters which directly affect the activities and responsibilities of almost every department and agency of the executive branch.

A sub-committee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary began hearings on S. J. Res. 1 on February 18. I am advised that the executive departments and agencies will have an opportunity to appear before the committee or to present their views concerning the resolution. In a matter of such fundamental importance it is vital that the Congress know the views of the executive branch. Accordingly, I request the head of each department and agency to examine the effects which these joint resolutions would have on matters coming under the jurisdiction of his department or agency and to prepare an official statement of views concerning them. I also request the head of each affected department and agency to ask the Committee promptly for an opportunity to appear and testify.

The White House staff will cooperate in any way that may be desired in this matter.

The issues raised in these resolutions are of the greatest importance. The constitutional amendment proposed in S. J. Res. 1 would not only impose restraints upon the President or agencies of the executive branch but would affect the powers of the Federal Government as a whole and those of the States. Action by the Congress on either of these resolutions should not be taken without the fullest consideration and debate.

In view of the urgency of coordinating the effort of the departments and agencies affected, a copy of your statement should be forwarded to the White House by Monday, March 2. It is further suggested that the counsel or other appropriate representative of your department or agency be present at a meeting to be held at the White House at 11:00 a.m. Friday, February 27, to effect coordination of the combined efforts.

Dee W. Rusk